

# Succinct Posets

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**Abstract.** We describe an algorithm for compressing a partially ordered set, or *poset*, so that it occupies space matching the information theory lower bound (to within lower order terms), in the worst case. Using this algorithm, we design a succinct data structure for representing a poset that, given two elements, can report whether one precedes the other in constant time. This is equivalent to succinctly representing the transitive closure graph of the poset, and we note that the same method can also be used to succinctly represent the transitive reduction graph. For an  $n$  element poset, the data structure occupies  $n^2/4 + o(n^2)$  bits, in the worst case, which is roughly half the space occupied by an upper triangular matrix. Furthermore, a slight extension to this data structure yields a succinct oracle for reachability in arbitrary directed graphs. Thus, using roughly a quarter of the space required to represent an arbitrary directed graph, reachability queries can be supported in constant time.

## 1 Introduction

Partially ordered sets, or *posets*, are useful for modelling relationships between objects, and appear in many different areas, such as natural language processing, machine learning, and database systems. As problem instances in these areas are ever-increasing in size, developing more space efficient data structures for representing posets is becoming an increasingly important problem.

When designing a data structure to represent a particular type of combinatorial object, it is useful to first determine how many objects there are of that type. By a constructive enumeration argument, Kleitman and Rothschild [11] showed that the number of  $n$  element posets is  $2^{n^2/4 + O(n)}$ . Thus, the information theoretic lower bound indicates that representing an arbitrary poset requires  $\lg(2^{n^2/4 + O(n)}) = n^2/4 + O(n)$  bits<sup>1</sup>. This naturally raises the question of how a poset can be represented using only  $n^2/4 + o(n^2)$  bits, *and* support efficient query operations. Such a representation, that occupies space matching the information theoretic lower bound to within lower order terms while supporting efficient query operations, is called a *succinct data structure* [9].

The purpose of this paper is to answer this question by describing the first succinct representation of arbitrary posets. We give a detailed description of our results in Section 4, but first provide some definitions in Section 2 and then highlight some of the previous work related to this problem in Section 3.

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\* This research was funded in part by NSERC of Canada, and the Canada Research Chairs program.

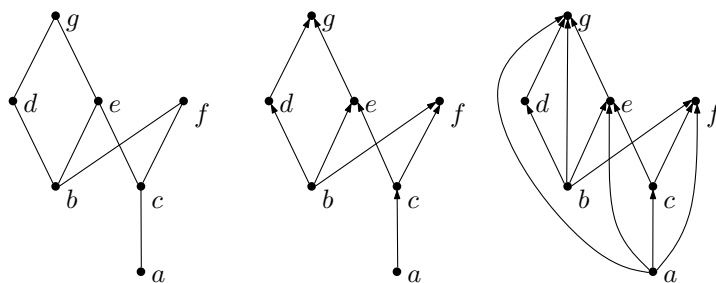
<sup>1</sup> We use  $\lg n$  to denote  $\lceil \log_2 n \rceil$ .

## 2 Definitions

A poset  $P$ , is a reflexive, antisymmetric, transitive binary relation  $\preceq$  on a set of  $n$  elements  $S$ , denoted  $P = (S, \preceq)$ . Let  $a$  and  $b$  be two elements in  $S$ . If  $a \preceq b$ , we say  $a$  *precedes*  $b$ . We refer to queries of the form, “Does  $a$  precede  $b$ ?” as *precedence queries*. If neither  $a \preceq b$  or  $b \preceq a$ , then we say  $a$  and  $b$  are *incomparable*. For convenience we write  $a \prec b$  if  $a \preceq b$  and  $a \neq b$ .

Each poset  $P = (S, \preceq)$  is uniquely described by a directed acyclic graph, or DAG,  $G_c = (S, E_c)$ , where  $E_c = \{(a, b) : a \prec b\}$  is the set of edges. The DAG  $G_c$  is the *transitive closure graph* of  $P$ . Note that a precedence query for elements  $a$  and  $b$  is equivalent to the query, “Is the edge  $(a, b)$  in  $E_c$ ?” Alternatively, let  $G_r = (S, E_r)$  be the DAG such that  $E_r = \{(a, b) : a \prec b, \nexists c \in S, a \prec c \prec b\}$ , i.e., the minimal set of edges that imply all the edges in  $E_c$  by transitivity. The DAG  $G_r$  also uniquely describes  $P$ , and is called the *transitive reduction graph* of  $P$ .

Posets are also sometimes illustrated using a *Hasse diagram*, which displays all the edges in the transitive reduction, and indicates the direction of an edge  $(a, b)$  by drawing element  $a$  above  $b$ . We refer to elements that have no outward edges in the transitive reduction as *sinks*, and elements that have no inward edges in the transitive reduction as *sources*. See Figure 1 for an example. Since all these concepts are equivalent, we may freely move between them when discussing a poset, depending on which representation is the most convenient.



**Fig. 1.** A Hasse diagram of a poset (left), the transitive reduction (centre), and the transitive closure (right). Elements  $a$  and  $b$  are sources, and elements  $g$  and  $f$  are sinks.

A *linear extension*  $L = \{a_1, \dots, a_n\}$  is a total ordering of the elements in  $S$  such if  $a_i \prec a_j$  for some  $i \neq j$ , then  $i < j$ . However, note that the converse is not necessarily true: we cannot determine whether  $a_i \prec a_j$  unless we know that  $a_i$  and  $a_j$  are comparable elements. A *chain* of a poset,  $P = (S, \preceq)$ , is a total ordering  $C = \{a_1, \dots, a_k\}$  on a subset of  $k$  elements from  $S$  such that  $a_i \prec a_j$  iff  $i < j$ , for  $1 \leq i < j \leq k$ . An *antichain* is a set  $A = \{a_1, \dots, a_k\}$  that is a subset of  $k$  elements from  $S$ , such that each  $a_i$  and  $a_j$  are incomparable, for  $1 \leq i < j \leq k$ . The *height* of a poset is the size of its maximum length chain, and the *width* of a poset is the size of its maximum antichain.

For a graph  $G = (V, E)$ , we sometimes use  $E(H)$  to denote the set of edges  $\{(a, b) : (a, b) \in E, a \in H, b \in H\}$ , where  $H \subseteq V$ . Similarly, we use  $G(H)$  to denote the subgraph of  $G$  induced by  $H$ , i.e., the subgraph with vertex set  $H$  and edge set  $E(H)$ . Finally, if  $(a, b) \in E$ , or  $(b, a) \in E$ , we say that  $b$  is a *neighbour* of  $a$  in  $G$ .

### 3 Previous work

Previous work in the area of succinct data structures includes representations of arbitrary undirected graphs [6], planar graphs [1], and trees [14]. There has also been interest in developing reachability oracles for planar directed graphs [18], as well as approximate distance oracles for undirected graphs [19]. For restricted classes of posets, such as lattices [17] and distributive lattices [7], space efficient representations have been developed, though they are not succinct.

One way of storing a poset is by representing either its transitive closure graph, or transitive reduction graph, using an adjacency matrix. If we topologically order the vertices of this graph, then we can use an upper triangular matrix to represent the edges, since the graph is a DAG. Such a representation occupies  $\binom{n}{2}$  bits, and can, in a single bit probe, be used to report whether an edge exists in the graph between two specified elements. Thus, using this simple approach we can achieve a space bound that is roughly two times the information theory lower bound for representing a poset. An alternative representation, called the *ChainMerge* structure was proposed by Daskalakis et al. [4], that occupies  $O(nw)$  words of space, where  $w$  is the width of the poset. The ChainMerge structure, like the transitive closure graph, supports precedence queries in  $O(1)$  time.

Recently, Farzan and Fischer [5] presented a data structure that represents a poset using  $2nw(1 + o(1)) + (1 + \varepsilon)n \lg n$  bits, where  $w$  is the width of the poset, and  $\varepsilon > 0$  is an arbitrary positive constant. This data structure supports precedence queries in  $O(1)$  time, and many other operations in time proportional to the width of the poset. These operations are best expressed in terms of the transitive closure and reduction graphs, and include: reporting all neighbours of an element in the transitive closure in  $O(w + k)$  time, where  $k$  is the number of reported elements; reporting all neighbours of an element in the transitive reduction in  $O(w^2)$  time; reporting an arbitrary neighbour of an element in the transitive reduction in  $O(w)$  time; reporting whether an edge exists between two elements in the transitive reduction in  $O(w)$  time; reporting all elements that, for two elements  $a$  and  $b$ , are both preceded by  $a$  and precede  $b$  in  $O(w + k)$  time; among others. The basic idea of their data structure is to encode the ChainMerge structure of Daskalakis et al. [4] using bit sequences, and answer queries using rank and select operations on these bit sequences.

Since the data structure of Farzan and Fischer [5] is adaptive on width, it is appropriate for posets where the width is a slow-growing function of  $n$ . However, if we select a poset of  $n$  elements uniformly at random from the set of all possible  $n$  element posets, then it will have width  $n/2 + o(n)$  with high probability [11]. Thus, this representation may occupy as many as  $n^2 + o(n^2)$  bits, which is roughly

four times the information theory lower bound. Furthermore, with the exception of precedence queries, all other operations take linear time for such a poset.

## 4 Our Results

Our results hold in the word-RAM model of computation with word size  $\Theta(\lg n)$  bits. Our main result is summarized in the following theorem:

**Theorem 1.** *Let  $P = (S, \preceq)$  be a poset, where  $|S| = n$ . There is a succinct data structure for representing  $P$  that occupies  $n^2/4 + O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits, and can support precedence queries in  $O(1)$  time: i.e., given two elements  $a, b \in S$ , report whether  $a \preceq b$ .*

The previous theorem implies that we can, in  $O(1)$  time, answer queries of the form, “Is the edge  $(a, b)$  in the transitive closure graph of  $P$ ?” In fact, we can also apply the same representation to support, in  $O(1)$  time, queries of the form, “Is the edge  $(a, b)$  in the transitive reduction graph of  $P$ ?” However, at present it seems as though we can only support efficient queries in one or the other, *not both* simultaneously. For this reason we focus on the closure, since it is likely more useful, but state the following theorem:

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $G_r = (S, E_r)$  be the transitive reduction graph of a poset, where  $|S| = n$ . There is a succinct data structure for representing  $G_r$  that occupies  $n^2/4 + O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits, and, given two elements  $a, b \in S$ , can report whether  $(a, b) \in E_r$  in  $O(1)$  time.*

*Reachability in Directed Graphs* : For an arbitrary DAG, the *reachability relation* between vertices is a poset: i.e., given two vertices,  $a$  and  $b$ , the relation of whether there is a directed path from  $a$  to  $b$  in the DAG. As a consequence, Theorem 1 implies that there is a data structure that occupies  $n^2/4 + o(n^2)$  bits, and can support reachability queries in a DAG, in  $O(1)$  time. We can even strengthen this observation by noting that for an *arbitrary directed graph*  $G$ , the *condensation* of  $G$ — the graph that results by contracting each strongly connected component into a single vertex [3, Section 22.5]— is a DAG. Given two vertices  $a$  and  $b$ , if  $a$  and  $b$  are in the same strongly connected component, then  $b$  is reachable from  $a$ . Otherwise, we can apply Theorem 1 to the condensation of  $G$ . Thus, we get the following corollary:

**Corollary 1.** *Let  $G$  be a directed graph. There is a data structure that occupies  $n^2/4 + o(n^2)$  bits and, given two vertices of  $G$ ,  $a$  and  $b$ , can report whether  $b$  is reachable from  $a$  in  $O(1)$  time.*

Note that the space bound of the previous corollary is roughly a quarter of the space required to represent an arbitrary directed graph! Switching back to the terminology of order theory, the previous corollary generalizes Theorem 1 to the larger class of binary relations known as *quasi-orders*: i.e., binary relations that are reflexive and transitive, but not necessarily antisymmetric. In fact, reflexivity does not restrict the binary relation very much, so we can further generalize Theorem 1 to arbitrary *transitive binary relations*; we discuss this in Appendix A.

*Overview of the data structure:* The main idea behind our succinct data structure is to develop an algorithm for compressing a poset so that it occupies space matching the information theory lower bound (to within lower order terms), in the worst case. The main difficulty is ensuring that we are able to query the compressed structure efficiently. Our first attempt at designing a compression algorithm was essentially a reverse engineered version of an enumeration proof by Kleitman and Rothschild [10]. However, though the algorithm achieved the desired space bound, there was no obvious way to answer queries on the compressed data due to one crucial compression step. Though there are several other enumeration proofs (cf., [11,2]), they all appeal to a similar strategy, making the compressed data difficult to query. This led us to develop an alternate compression algorithm, that uses techniques from extremal graph theory.

We believe it is conceptually simpler to present our algorithm as having two steps. In the first step, we preprocess the poset, removing edges in its transitive closure graph, to create a new poset where the height is not too large. We refer to what remains as a *flat* poset. We then make use of the fact that, in a flat poset, either balanced biclique subgraphs of the transitive closure graph—containing  $\Omega(\lg n / \lg \lg n)$  elements—must exist, or the poset is relatively sparsely connected. In the former case, the connectivity between these balanced biclique subgraphs and the remaining elements is shown to be space efficient to encode using the fact that all edges implied by transitivity are in the transitive closure graph. In the latter case, we can directly apply techniques from the area of succinct data structures to compress the poset.

## 5 Succinct Data Structure

In this section we describe a succinct data structure for representing posets. In order to refer to the elements in the poset, we assume each element has a label. Since our goal is to design a data structure that occupies  $n^2/4 + o(n^2)$  bits, we are free to assign arbitrary  $O(\lg n)$ -bit labels to the elements, as such a labeling will require only  $O(n \lg n)$  bits. Thus, we can assume each element in our poset has a distinct integer label, drawn from the range  $[1, n]$ . Our data structure always refers to elements by their labels, so often when we refer to “element”  $a$ , it means “the element in  $S$  with label  $a$ ”, depending on context.

### 5.1 Preliminary Data Structures

Given a bit sequence  $B[1..n]$ , we use  $\text{access}(B, i)$  to denote the  $i$ -th bit in  $B$ , and  $\text{rank}(S, i)$  to denote the number of 1 bits in the prefix  $B[1..i]$ . We make use of the following lemma, which can be used to support access and rank operations on bit sequences, while compressing the sequence to its 0th-order empirical entropy.

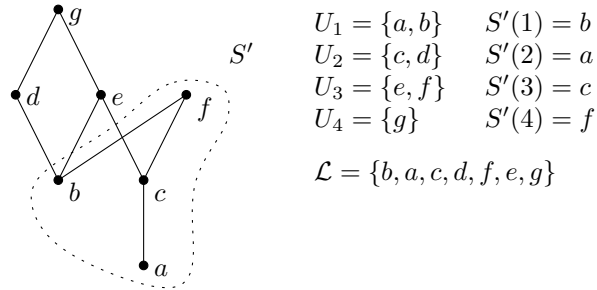
**Lemma 1 (Raman, Raman, Rao [16]).** *Given a bit sequence  $B$  of length  $n$ , of which  $\beta$  bits are 1, there is a data structure that can represent  $B$  using  $\lg \binom{n}{\beta} + O(n \lg \lg n / \lg n)$  bits that can support the operations **access**, and **rank** on  $B$  in  $O(1)$  time.*

## 5.2 Flattening a Poset

Let  $\gamma > 0$  be a parameter, to be fixed later; the reader would not be misled by thinking that we will eventually set  $\gamma = \lg n$ . We call a poset  $\gamma$ -flat if it has height no greater than  $\gamma$ . In this section, we describe a preprocessing algorithm for posets that outputs a data structure of size  $O(n^2/\gamma)$  bits, that transforms a poset into a  $\gamma$ -flat poset, without losing any information about its original structure. After describing this preprocessing algorithm, we develop a compression algorithm for flat posets. Using the preprocessing algorithm together with the compression algorithm yields a succinct data structure for posets.

Let  $P = (S, \preceq)$  be an arbitrary poset with transitive closure graph  $G_c = (S, E_c)$ . We decompose the elements of  $S$  into antichains based on their height within  $P$ . Let  $\mathcal{H}(P)$  denote the height of  $P$ . All the sources in  $S$  are of height 1, and therefore are assigned to the same set. Each non-source element  $a \in S$  is assigned a height equal to the length of the maximum path from a source to  $a$ . We use  $U_h$  to denote the set of all the elements of height  $h$ ,  $1 \leq h \leq \mathcal{H}(P)$ , and  $\mathcal{U}$  to denote the set  $\{U_1, \dots, U_{\mathcal{H}(P)}\}$ . Furthermore, it is clear that each set,  $U_h$ , is an antichain, since if  $a \prec b$  then the height of  $b$  is strictly greater than  $a$ .

Next, we compute a linear extension  $\mathcal{L}$  of the poset  $P$  in the following way, using  $\mathcal{U}$ . The linear extension  $\mathcal{L}$  is ordered such that all elements in  $U_i$  come before  $U_{i+1}$  for all  $1 \leq i < \mathcal{H}(P)$ , and the elements within the same  $U_i$  are ordered arbitrarily within  $\mathcal{L}$ . Given any subset  $S' \subseteq S$ , we use the notation  $S'(x)$  to denote the element ranked  $x$ -th according to  $\mathcal{L}$ , among the elements in the subset  $S'$ . We illustrate these concepts in Figure 2. Later, this particular linear extension will be used extensively, when we output the structure of the poset as a bit sequence.



**Fig. 2.** The antichain decomposition of the poset from Figure 1. The set  $S'$  is the set of elements surrounded by the dotted line. Note that  $\mathcal{L}$  is only one of many possible linear extensions.

We now describe a preprocessing algorithm to transform an arbitrary poset  $P$  into a  $\gamma$ -flat poset  $\tilde{P}$ . We assume  $P$  is not  $\gamma$ -flat, otherwise we are done. Given two consecutive antichains  $U_i$  and  $U_{i+1}$ , we define a *merge step* to be the operation of replacing  $U_i$  and  $U_{i+1}$  by a new antichain  $U'_i = U_i \cup U_{i+1}$ , and outputting

and removing all the edges between elements in  $U_i$  and  $U_{i+1}$  in the transitive closure of  $P$ , i.e.,  $E_c(U_i \cup U_{i+1})$ . We say that  $U_{i+1}$  is the *upper antichain*,  $U_i$  is the *lower antichain*, and refer to the new antichain  $U'_i$  as the *merged antichain*. Each antichain  $U_j$  where  $j > i+1$  becomes antichain  $U'_{j-1}$  in the *residual decomposition*, after the merge step. To represent the edges, let  $B$  be a bit sequence, storing  $|U_i||U_{i+1}|$  bits. The bit sequence  $B$  is further subdivided into sections, denoted  $B^x$ , for each  $x \in [1, |U_i|]$ , where the bit  $B^x[y]$  represents whether there is an edge from  $U_i(x)$  to  $U_{i+1}(y)$ ; or equivalently, whether  $U_i(x) \prec U_{i+1}(y)$ . We say that antichain  $U_{i+1}$  is *associated* with  $B$ , and vice versa. The binary string  $B$  is represented using the data structure of Lemma 1, which compresses it to its 0th-order empirical entropy<sup>2</sup>. Note that, after the merge step, the elements in merged antichain  $U'_i$  are ordered, in the linear extension  $\mathcal{L}$ , such that  $U'_i(x) = U_i(x)$  for  $1 \leq x \leq |U_i|$  and  $U'_i(y + |U_i|) = U_{i+1}(y)$  for  $1 \leq y \leq |U_{i+1}|$ .

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**Algorithm** FLATTEN( $\mathcal{U}, i$ ): where  $i$  is the index of an antichain in  $\mathcal{U}$ .

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if  $i > |\mathcal{U}|$  then
    EXIT
end if
if  $|U_i| + |U_{i+1}| \leq 2n/\gamma$  then
    Perform a merge step on  $U_i$  and  $U_{i+1}$ 
else
     $i \leftarrow i + 1$ 
end if
FLATTEN( $\mathcal{U}, i$ )

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There are many possible ways that we could apply merge steps to the poset in order to make it  $\gamma$ -flat. The method we choose, presented in algorithm FLATTEN, has the added benefit that accessing the output bit sequences is straightforward. Let  $\tilde{\mathcal{U}}$  be the residual antichain decomposition that remains after executing FLATTEN( $\mathcal{U}, 1$ ), and  $\tilde{P}$  be the resulting poset. The number of antichains in  $\tilde{\mathcal{U}}$  is at most  $\gamma$ , and therefore the remaining poset  $\tilde{P}$  is  $\gamma$ -flat. We make the following further observation:

**Lemma 2.** FLATTEN( $\mathcal{U}, 1$ ) outputs  $O(n^2/\gamma)$  bits.

*Proof.* Consider the decomposition  $\mathcal{U}$  and let  $m = \mathcal{H}(P) = |\mathcal{U}|$ . Let  $n_1, \dots, n_m$  denote the number of elements in  $U_1, \dots, U_m$ , and  $n_{s,t}$  to denote  $\sum_{i=s}^t n_i$ . We use the fact that the expression  $\sum_{i=s}^{t-1} ((\sum_{j=s}^i n_j) n_{i+1}) \leq n_{s,t}(n_{s,t} - 1)/2$ , where  $1 \leq s < t \leq m$ ; we include a proof in Appendix B. For each of the at most  $\gamma$  antichains in  $\tilde{\mathcal{U}}$ , the previous inequality implies that FLATTEN outputs no more than  $O(n_{s,t}^2)$  bits, where  $n_{s,t} = O(n/\gamma)$ . Thus, overall the number of bits output during the merging steps is  $O((n/\gamma)^2 \gamma) = O(n^2/\gamma)$ .  $\square$

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<sup>2</sup> We note that for our purposes in this section, compression of the bit sequence is not required to achieve the desired asymptotic space bounds. However, the fact that Lemma 1 compresses the bit sequence will indeed matter in Section 5.3.

We now show how to use the output of the merge steps to answer connectivity queries for edges that were removed by the FLATTEN algorithm:

**Lemma 3.** *There is a data structure of size  $O(n^2/\gamma)$  bits that, given two elements  $a$  and  $b$  can determine in  $O(1)$  time whether  $a$  precedes  $b$ , if both  $a$  and  $b$  belong to the same antichain in the residual antichain decomposition  $\tilde{\mathcal{U}}$ .*

*Proof.* We add additional data structures to the output of FLATTEN in order to support queries. Since the labels of elements in  $S$  are in the range  $[1, n]$ , we can treat elements as array indices. Thus, it is trivial to construct an  $O(n \lg n)$  bit array that, given elements  $a, b \in S$ , returns values  $i, i', j, j', x, x', y$  and  $y'$  in  $O(1)$  time such that  $U_i(x) = a$ ,  $U_j(y) = b$ ,  $U_{i'}(x') = a$ ,  $U_{j'}(y') = b$ , where  $U_i, U_j \in \mathcal{U}$  and  $U_{i'}, U_{j'} \in \tilde{\mathcal{U}}$ . We also store an array  $A$  containing  $|\mathcal{U}|$  records. For each antichain  $U_i \in \mathcal{U}$ , if  $U_i$  is the upper antichain during a merge step<sup>3</sup>, then:  $A[i].\text{pnt}$  points to the start of the sequence,  $B$ , associated with  $U_i$ , and;  $A[i].\text{len}$  stores the length of the lower antichain. Recall that after the merge step, the element  $U_i(x)$  has rank  $x + A[i].\text{len}$  in the merged antichain. Thus,  $A[i].\text{len}$  is the *offset* of the ranks of the elements of  $U_i$  within the merged antichain. These extra data structures occupy  $O(n \lg n)$  bits and are dominated by the size of the output of FLATTEN, so the claimed space bound holds by Lemma 2.

We now discuss how to answer a query. Given  $a, b \in S$ , if  $i' \neq j'$ , then we return “different antichains”. Otherwise, if  $i = j$ , then we return “no”. Otherwise, assume without loss of generality that  $i > j$ . Thus,  $U_i$  is the upper antichain, and  $A[i].\text{pnt}$  is a pointer to a sequence  $B$ , whereas  $U_j$  is a subset of the lower antichain  $\hat{U}_k$ , and  $A[j].\text{len}$  is the offset of the elements in  $U_j$  within  $\hat{U}_k$ . Let  $z = y + A[j].\text{len}$ , and return “yes” if  $B^z[x] = 1$  and “no” otherwise. Section  $B^z$  begins at the  $((z - 1)|U_i|)$ -th bit of  $B$  so we can access  $B^z[x]$  in  $O(1)$  time.  $\square$

### 5.3 Compressing Flat Posets

In this section we describe a compression algorithm for flat posets that, in the worst case, matches the information theory lower bound to within lower order terms. We begin by stating the following lemma, which is a constructive deterministic version of a well known theorem by Kővári, Sós, and Turán [12]:

**Lemma 4 (Mubayi and Turán [13]).** *There is a constant  $c_{\min}$  such that, given a graph with  $|V| \geq c_{\min}$  vertices and  $|E| \geq 8|V|^{3/2}$  edges, we can find a balanced biclique  $K_{q,q}$ , where  $q = \Theta(\lg |V| / \lg(|V|^2/|E|))$ , in time  $O(|E|)$ .*

Let  $\tilde{P}$  be a  $(\lg n)$ -flat poset,  $G_c = (S, E_c)$  be its transitive closure, and  $\tilde{\mathcal{U}} = \{U_1, \dots, U_m\}$  be its antichain decomposition (discussed in the last section), which contains  $m \leq \lg n$  antichains. We now prove our key lemma, which is crucial for the compression algorithm.

<sup>3</sup> Note that, with the exception of the first merge step,  $U_i \in \mathcal{U}$  is *not* the  $i$ -th antichain in the decomposition when the merge step occurs, but we will store records for the index  $i$  rather than some intermediate index.



**Lemma 5 (Key Lemma).** *Consider the subgraph  $G_{\mathcal{U}} = G_c(U_i \cup U_{i+1})$  for some  $1 \leq i < m$ , and ignore the edge directions so that  $G_{\mathcal{U}}$  is undirected. Suppose  $G_{\mathcal{U}}$  contains a balanced biclique subgraph with vertex set  $D$ , and  $|D| = \tau$ . Then there are at most  $2^{\tau/2+1} - 1$  ways that the vertices in  $D$  can be connected to each vertex in  $S \setminus (U_i \cup U_{i+1})$ .*

*Proof.* Each vertex  $v \in S \setminus (U_i \cup U_{i+1})$  is in  $U_j$ , where, either  $j > i + 1$  or  $j < i$ . Without loss of generality, consider the case where  $j > i + 1$ . If  $v$  is connected to any vertex  $u \in D \cap U_{i+1}$ , then  $v$  is connected to *all* vertices in  $D \cap U_i$ . Thus,  $v$  can be connected to the vertices in  $D \cap U_{i+1}$  in  $2^{\tau/2} - 1$  ways, or to the vertices in  $D \cap U_i$  in  $2^{\tau/2} - 1$  ways, or not connected to  $D$  at all. In total, there are  $2^{\tau/2+1} - 1$  ways to connect  $v$  to  $D$ .  $\square$

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**Algorithm** COMPRESS-FLAT( $\hat{P}, \hat{n}, \hat{\mathcal{U}}, \hat{m}$ ): where  $\hat{P} = (\hat{S}, \preceq)$  is a  $(\lg n)$ -flat poset of  $\hat{n} \leq n$  elements, and  $\hat{\mathcal{U}} = \{\hat{U}_1, \dots, \hat{U}_{\hat{m}}\}$  is a decomposition of the elements in  $\hat{P}$  into  $\hat{m}$  antichains.

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1: if  $\hat{m} = 1$  then
2:   EXIT
3: else if  $|\hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1}| \geq c_{\min}$  and  $|E_c(\hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1})| \geq (\hat{n}/\lg \hat{n})^2$ , for an  $i \in [1, \hat{m}]$  then
4:   Apply Lemma 4 to the subgraph  $G_c(\hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1})$ . This computes a balanced bi-
     clique with vertex set  $D \subset \hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1}$  such that  $\tau = |D| = \Omega(\lg \hat{n}/\lg \lg \hat{n})$ .
5:   For each element  $b \in \hat{U}_i \cap D$  output a bit sequence  $W_b^-$  of  $|\hat{U}_{i+1}|$  bits, where
      $W_b^-[k] = 1$  iff  $b \prec \hat{U}_{i+1}(k)$ .
6:   For each element  $a \in \hat{U}_{i+1} \cap D$  output a bit sequence  $W_a^+$  of  $|\hat{U}_i|$  bits, where
      $W_a^+[k] = 1$  iff  $\hat{U}_i(k) \prec a$ .
7:   Let  $H = \hat{S} \setminus (\hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1})$ . Output an array of integers  $Y$ , where  $Y[k] \in [0, 2^{\tau/2+1} - 1]$ 
     and indicates how  $H(k)$  is connected to  $D$  (see Lemma 5).
8:   Set  $\hat{U}_i \leftarrow \hat{U}_i \setminus D$ 
9:   Set  $\hat{U}_{i+1} \leftarrow \hat{U}_{i+1} \setminus D$ 
10:  COMPRESS-FLAT( $\hat{P} \setminus D, \hat{n} - \tau, \hat{\mathcal{U}}, \hat{m}$ )
11: else
12:   Perform a merge step on  $\hat{U}_1$  and  $\hat{U}_2$ 
13:   Set  $\hat{m} \leftarrow \hat{m} - 1$ 
14:   COMPRESS-FLAT( $\hat{P}, \hat{n}, \hat{\mathcal{U}}, \hat{m}$ )
15: end if

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Consider the algorithm COMPRESS-FLAT. The main idea is to repeatedly apply Lemma 4 to two consecutive antichains the antichain decomposition that have many edges— defined on line 3— between them in the transitive closure graph. If no such antichains exist, then we apply merge steps. The algorithm terminates when only one antichain remains. We refer to the case on lines 4-10 as the *dense case*, and the case on lines 12-14 as the *sparse case*. We now prove that the size of the output of the compression algorithm matches the information theory lower bound to within lower order terms.

**Lemma 6.** *The output of COMPRESS-FLAT( $\tilde{P}, n, \tilde{U}, m$ ) is no more than  $n^2/4 + O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits.*

*Proof (Sketch).* In the base case (line 2), the lemma trivially holds since nothing is output. Next we give the intuition to show that the total output from all the sparse cases cannot exceed  $O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits. Recall that the representation of Lemma 1 compresses to  $\lg \lceil \binom{t}{\beta} \rceil + O(t \lg t / \lg t)$  bits, where  $t$  is the length of the bit sequence, and  $\beta$  is the number of 1 bits. We use the fact that  $\lg \lceil \binom{t}{\beta} \rceil \leq \beta \lg(et/\beta) + O(1)$  [8, Section 4.6.4]. For a single pass through the sparse case, the total number of bits represented by  $B$  is  $t = O(n^2)$ , and  $\beta = O((n/\lg n)^2)$  bits are 1's. Thus, the first term in the space bound to represent  $B$  using Lemma 1 (applying the inequality) is  $O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg^2 n)$  bits. Since we can enter the sparse case at most  $\lg n$  times before exiting on line 2, the total number of bits occupied by the first term is bounded by  $O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$ . To ensure the second term ( $O(t \lg t / \lg t)$ ) in the space bound of Lemma 1 does not dominate the cost, we use the standard technique of applying Lemma 1 to the concatenation of all the bit sequences output in the sparse case, rather than each individual sequence separately (see Appendix C for more details).

We now prove the lemma by induction for the dense case. Let  $\mathcal{S}(n)$  denote the number of bits output by COMPRESS-FLAT( $\tilde{P}, n, \tilde{U}, m$ ). *Inductive step:* We can assume  $\mathcal{S}(n_0) \leq n_0^2/4 + c_0(n_0^2 \lg \lg n_0)/\lg n_0$  for all  $1 \leq n_0 < n$ , where  $n \geq 2$ , and  $c_0 > 0$  is some sufficiently large constant. All the additional self-delimiting information—for example, storing the length of the sequences output on lines 5-7—occupies no more than  $c_1 \lg n$  bits for some constant  $c_1 > 0$ . Finally, recall that  $\tau \geq c_2 \lg n / \lg \lg n$  for some constant  $c_2 > 0$ . We have:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{S}(n) &= \frac{\tau}{2} (|U_i| + |U_j|) + (n - (|U_i| + |U_j|)) \lg(2^{\tau/2+1}) + c_1 \lg n + \mathcal{S}(n - \tau) \\
&\leq \left(\frac{\tau}{2} + 1\right)n + c_1 \lg n + \frac{1}{4} (n^2 - 2n\tau + \tau^2) + \frac{c_0 \lg \lg n}{\lg(n - \tau)} (n^2 - 2n\tau + \tau^2) \\
&\leq c_3 n + \frac{n^2}{4} + \frac{c_0 n^2 \lg \lg n}{\lg(n - \tau)} - c_4 n \quad (c_4 < c_0 c_2, c_3 > 1) \\
&\leq \frac{n^2}{4} + \frac{c_0 n^2 \lg \lg n}{\lg(n - \tau)} - c_5 n \quad (c_5 = c_4 - c_3)
\end{aligned}$$

Note that through our choice of  $c_0$  and  $c_3$ , we can ensure that  $c_5$  is a positive constant. If  $\lg(n - \tau) = \lg n$ , then the induction step clearly holds. The alternative case can only happen when  $n$  is greater than a power of 2, and  $n - \tau$  is less than a power of two, due to the ceiling function on  $\lg$ . Thus, the alternative case only occurs once every  $O(n/\lg n)$  times we remove a biclique, since each biclique contains  $O(\lg n)$  elements. By charging this extra cost to the rightmost negative term, the induction holds.  $\square$

We now show how to support precedence queries on a  $(\lg n)$ -flat poset. As in the previous section, if element  $a$  is removed in the dense case, we say  $a$  is

associated with the output on lines 6-9. Similarly, for each antichain  $U_i \in \tilde{\mathcal{U}}$  involved in a merge step as the upper antichain in the sparse case, we say that  $U$  is associated with the output of that merge step, and vice versa.

**Lemma 7.** *Let  $\tilde{P}$  be a  $(\lg n)$ -flat poset on  $n$  elements, with antichain decomposition  $\tilde{U} = \{U_1, \dots, U_m\}$ . There is a data structure of size  $n^2/4 + O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits that, given two elements  $a$  and  $b$ , can report whether  $a$  precedes  $b$  in  $O(1)$  time.*

*Proof (Sketch).* We augment the output of COMPRESS-FLAT with additional data structures in order to answer queries efficiently. Let  $D_0$  be an empty set. We denote the first set of elements removed in a dense case as  $D_1$ , the second set as  $D_2$  and so on. Let  $D_r$  denote the last set of elements removed in a dense case, for some  $r = O(n \lg \lg n / \lg n)$ . Let  $S_\ell = S / (\cup_{i=0}^{\ell-1} D_i)$ , for  $1 \leq \ell \leq r+1$ . We define  $M_\ell(x)$  to be the number of elements  $a \in S_\ell$  such that  $S(y) = a$ , and  $y \leq x$ . We now discuss how to compute  $M_\ell(x)$  in  $O(1)$  time using a data structure of size  $O(n^2 \lg \lg n / \lg n)$  bits. Define  $M'_\ell$  to be a bit sequence, where  $M'_\ell[x] = 1$  iff  $S(x) \in S_\ell$ , for  $x \in [1, n]$ . We represent  $M'_\ell$  using the data structure of Lemma 1, for  $1 \leq \ell \leq r+1$ . Overall, these data structures occupy  $O(n^2 \lg \lg n / \lg n)$  bits, since  $r = O((n \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$ , and each binary string occupies  $O(n)$  bits by Lemma 1. To compute  $M_\ell(x)$  we return  $\text{rank}_1(M'_\ell, x)$ , which requires  $O(1)$  time by Lemma 1. By combining the index just described with techniques similar in spirit to those used in Lemma 3, we can support precedence queries in  $O(1)$  time. The idea is to find the output associated with the query elements, and find the correct bit in the output to examine using the index just described; the details can be found in Appendix D.

Theorem 1 follows by combining Lemmas 3 (with  $\gamma$  set to  $\lg n$ ) and 7.

## 6 Concluding remarks

In this paper we have presented the first succinct data structure for arbitrary posets. For a poset of  $n$  elements, our data structure occupies  $n^2/4 + o(n^2)$  bits and can support precedence queries in  $O(1)$  time. This is equivalent to supporting  $O(1)$  time queries of the form, “Is the edge  $(a, b)$  in the transitive closure graph of  $P$ ?”

Our first remark is that if we want to support edge queries on the transitive reduction instead of the closure, a slightly simpler data structure can be used. The reason for this simplification is that for the transitive reduction, our key lemma does not require the antichains containing the biclique to be consecutive, and, furthermore, we can “flatten” the transitive reduction in a much simpler way than by using Lemma 3. We defer additional details to the full version. Our second remark is that, in terms of practical behaviour, there are alternative representations of bit sequences that support our required operations efficiently (though not  $O(1)$  time), and have smaller lower order terms in their space bound (e.g., [15]). In practice, using these structures would reduce the lower order terms

significantly. Finally, we remark that we can report the neighbours of an arbitrary element in the transitive closure graph efficiently, without asymptotically increasing the space bound of Theorem 1. This is done by encoding the neighbours using a bit sequence, if there are few of them, and checking all  $n - 1$  possibilities via queries to the data structure of Theorem 1, if there are many. We defer the details until the full version.

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## A Generalization to Transitive Binary Relations

In this section we discuss how to generalize Theorem 1 to transitive binary relations. We make use of some notation described in Section 5, so we recommend reading that section first.

**Theorem 3.** *Let  $T = (S, \preceq)$  be a transitive binary relation  $\preceq$  on a set of elements  $S$ , where  $|S| = n$ . There is a succinct data structure for representing  $T$  that occupies  $n^2/4 + O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits, and can support precedence queries in  $O(1)$  time: i.e., given two elements  $a, b \in S$ , report whether  $a \preceq b$ .*

*Proof.* Given a transitive binary relation,  $T = (S, \preceq)$ , we store a bit sequence  $B$ , where  $B[i] = 1$  iff  $S(i) \preceq S(i)$ . Thus, by using  $n$  bits, we can report whether  $a \preceq a$  in  $O(1)$  time, for any  $a \in S$ . At this point, we define a quasiorder  $Q = (S, \preceq')$ , where  $a \preceq' b$  iff  $a \preceq b$ , for all *distinct* elements  $a, b \in S$ . We represent the  $Q$  using Corollary 1. Given  $a, b \in S$ , if  $a = b$ , and  $S(i) = a$ , then we query  $B$  and report “yes” iff  $B[i] = 1$ , otherwise, we query the representation of  $Q$  to determine whether  $a$  precedes  $b$ .  $\square$

## B Proof of inequality used in Lemma 2

The inequality is proved by induction on  $t$ , fixing  $s = 1$  (since the actual value of  $s$  is irrelevant). Base case:  $t = 2$  holds since  $(n_1 + n_2)(n_1 + n_2 - 1)/2 \geq n_1 n_2$  for all integers  $n_1, n_2 \geq 1$ . Inductive step: Assume the inequality holds for all  $2 \leq t_0 < t$ . We have:

$$\begin{aligned}
& \sum_{i=1}^{t-1} \left( \left( \sum_{j=1}^i n_j \right) n_{i+1} \right) = \sum_{i=1}^{t-2} \left( \left( \sum_{j=1}^i n_j \right) n_{i+1} \right) + \left( \sum_{j=1}^{t-1} n_j \right) n_t \\
&= n_{1,t-1} \left( \frac{n_{1,t-1} - 1}{2} + n_t \right) \\
&= (n_{1,t} - n_t) \left( \frac{n_{1,t} - 1 + n_t}{2} \right) \\
&= n_{1,t} \left( \frac{n_{1,t} - 1 + n_t}{2} \right) - n_t \left( \frac{n_{1,t} - 1 + n_t}{2} \right) \\
&= n_{1,t} \left( \frac{n_{1,t} - 1}{2} \right) + \frac{n_{1,t} n_t}{2} - \frac{n_t n_{1,t}}{2} + \frac{n_t}{2} - \frac{n_t^2}{2} \\
&= n_{1,t} \left( \frac{n_{1,t} - 1}{2} \right) - \frac{n_t(n_t - 1)}{2} \\
&\leq n_{1,t} \left( \frac{n_{1,t} - 1}{2} \right)
\end{aligned}$$

Which completes the proof.

## C Extra Details for Lemma 6

In order to achieve  $O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits for the sparse case, we need to use the standard trick in succinct data structures of *concatenating* all of the bit sequences output during the merge steps into one long bit sequence, before applying Lemma 1 to the sequence. Note that we can still perform rank operations on an arbitrary range  $[x_1, x_2]$  of this concatenated sequence, by adjusting our search to take into account the number of 1s in the prefix  $[1, x_1 - 1]$ . Since this can be computed using a single rank operation, it does not affect the time required to perform rank operations. By storing this concatenated sequence in the data structure of Lemma 1, we guarantee that the lower order term in the space bound will not dominate the space bound. By the same analysis presented in Lemma 2, the length of the concatenated bit sequence will be  $O(n^2)$  bits. Thus, the size of the lower order terms will be  $O((n^2 \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits.

## D Proof of Lemma 7

We augment the output of COMPRESS-FLAT with additional data structures in order to answer queries efficiently. Let  $D_0$  be an empty set. We denote the first set of elements removed in a dense case as  $D_1$ , the second set as  $D_2$  and so on. Let  $D_r$  denote the last set of elements removed in a dense case, for some  $r = O(n \lg \lg n / \lg n)$ . Let  $S_\ell = S / (\cup_{i=0}^{\ell-1} D_i)$ , for  $1 \leq \ell \leq r + 1$ . We define  $M_\ell(x)$  to be the number of elements  $a \in S_\ell$  such that  $S(y) = a$ , and  $y \leq x$ . We now discuss how to compute  $M_\ell(x)$  in  $O(1)$  time using a data structure of size  $O(n^2 \lg \lg n / \lg n)$  bits. Define  $M'_\ell$  to be a bit sequence, where  $M'_\ell[x] = 1$  iff  $S(x) \in S_\ell$ , for  $x \in [1, n]$ . We represent  $M'_\ell$  using the data structure of Lemma 1, for  $1 \leq \ell \leq r + 1$ . Overall, these data structures occupy  $O(n^2 \lg \lg n / \lg n)$  bits, since  $r = O((n \lg \lg n)/\lg n)$  bits, and each binary string occupies  $O(n)$  bits by Lemma 1. To compute  $M_\ell(x)$  we return  $\text{rank}_1(M'_\ell, x)$ , which requires  $O(1)$  time by Lemma 1.

Consider an element  $a$  removed during the dense case as part of the biclique  $D_k$ . When we refer to  $a$  we will often reference the antichains  $\hat{U}_i$  and  $\hat{U}_{i+1}$  such that  $D_k \subset \hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1}$  (see line 6). Note that the indices  $i$  and  $i + 1$  do *not necessarily* correspond to the indices of antichains in the initial antichain decomposition,  $\tilde{U}$ . We store an array  $C$ , where:

- $C[a].\text{id}$  is the value  $k$  such that  $a \in D_k$ , or  $\infty$  if  $a$  was not removed;
- $C[a].\text{rank}$  is the value  $x$  such that  $D_k(x) = a$ ;
- $C[a].\text{top}$  is a bit indicating whether  $a$  was in  $U_{i+1}$ , when  $D_k$  was removed;
- $C[a].\text{pnt}$  is a pointer to the output associated with  $a$ ,  $W_{a^-}$ ,  $W_{a^+}$ , and  $Y$ ;
- $C[a].\text{ds}$  the number of elements with rank less than  $a$  in  $\hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1}$ ;
- $C[a].\text{dt}$  the number of elements with rank greater than  $a$  in  $\hat{U}_i \cup \hat{U}_{i+1}$ .

Similar in spirit to Lemma 3, we store an  $O(n \lg n)$  bit array that in  $O(1)$  time, for elements  $a$  and  $b$  returns  $i, j, x$  and  $y$  such  $U_i, U_j \in \hat{\mathcal{U}}$ ,  $U_i(x) = a$ , and  $U_j(y) = b$ . Note that in this case, the indices *do* correspond to the indices of the

antichains in the initial antichain decomposition  $\tilde{\mathcal{U}}$ . We also store an array  $A$  of records, where, for each antichain  $U_j \in \tilde{\mathcal{U}}$ , if  $U_j$  was the upper antichain in a merge step during a sparse case:

- $A[j].\text{pnt}$  points to the beginning of the sequence,  $B$ , associated with  $U_j$ , or null if no sequence is associated with  $U_j$ ;
- $A[j].\text{delta}$  stores the value  $\ell$  such that the merge step occurred after the element set  $D_{\ell-1}$  was removed, and before  $D_\ell$  was removed.

Finally, we store an array of partial sums  $F$ , where  $F[i] = \sum_{k=1}^{i-1} |U_k|$ . All these additional data structures occupy  $O((n^2 \lg \lg n) / \lg n)$  bits, so the claimed space bound holds by Lemma 6.

*Query Algorithm:* If  $i = j$ , then we return "no". Otherwise, we assume, without loss of generality,  $i > j$ . There are several cases:

1. If  $C[a].\text{id} = C[b].\text{id}$  and  $C[a].\text{id} \neq \infty$ , then:
  - (a) If  $C[a].\text{top} \neq C[b].\text{top}$ , then report "yes", since there must be an edge between  $a$  and  $b$  in the removed biclique.
  - (b) Otherwise, use  $A[i].\text{pnt}$  to locate the bit sequence  $B$ , let  $\ell = A[i].\text{delta}$ , and  $z = M_\ell(F[j] + y)$ . We report "yes" if  $B^z[M_\ell(F[i] + x)] = 1$  and "no" otherwise.
2. If  $C[a].\text{id} = C[b].\text{id} = \infty$ , then the procedure is similar to case 1b.
3. If  $C[a].\text{id} < C[b].\text{id}$ , then let  $\ell = C[a].\text{id}$ .
  - (a) If  $A[i].\text{top} = 1$  and  $M_\ell(F[i] + x) - C[a].\text{ds} \leq M_\ell(F[j] + y)$ , then consider the binary string  $W_a^+$ , that we can locate using  $C[a].\text{pnt}$ . If  $A[j].\text{delta} > \ell$ , then bit  $W_a^+[M_\ell(F[j] + y) - M_\ell(F[j])]$  indicates whether there is an edge from  $a$  to  $b$ . Otherwise, we check bit  $W_a^+[M_\ell(F[j] + y)]$ .
  - (b) If  $A[i].\text{top} = 0$  and  $M_\ell(F[i] + x) - C[a].\text{ds} - 1 = 0$ , then the bit we want to examine was output during a merge step, and we handle this as in case 1b.
  - (c) Otherwise, consider the sequence of integers,  $Y$ , that we can locate using  $C[a].\text{pnt}$ . By examining  $Y[M_\ell(F[j] + y)]$  and  $C[a].\text{rank}$  we can determine whether there is an edge from  $a$  to  $b$  in  $O(1)$  time<sup>4</sup>.
4. If  $C[b].\text{id} < C[a].\text{id}$ , then let  $\ell = C[b].\text{id}$ .
  - (a) If  $A[i].\text{delta} \leq \ell$ , then the bit we want to examine was output during a merge step, and we handle this as in case 1b.
  - (b) If  $B[i].\text{top} = 0$ , and  $M_\ell(F[j] + y) + C[b].\text{dt} \geq M_\ell(F[i] + y)$ , then consider the binary string  $W_b^-$ , that we can locate using  $C[b].\text{pnt}$ . Let  $z = M_\ell(F[i] + x) - M_\ell(F[i])$ . The bit  $W_b^-[z]$  indicates whether there is an edge from  $a$  to  $b$ .
  - (c) Otherwise, consider the sequence of integers  $Y$ , that we can locate using  $C[b].\text{pnt}$ . We examine  $Y[M_\ell(F[i] + x) - C[b].\text{ds} - C[b].\text{dt} - 1]$  and  $C[b].\text{rank}$  to determine whether  $a$  is connected to  $b$ . Notice that we must correct for the fact that the two consecutive antichains,  $\hat{U}_i$  and  $\hat{U}_{i+1}$ , that contain  $D_\ell$  are not part of the set  $H$  on line 9.

□

<sup>4</sup> Briefly, we can use word-level parallelism, since  $Y[M_\ell(F[j] + y)]$  fits in  $O(1)$  words.